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STATE DEPT FOR WHA/CCA

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SUBJECT: DEATH THREAT FOR CUBAN ACTIVIST ROQUE

Classified By: COM Michael Parmly for Reason 1.4(d).

11. (C) Summary: Cuban pro-regime thugs held a late-night "act of repudiation" August 19-20 outside the home of pro-democracy activist Martha Beatriz Roque and brandished a pistol while inviting her to "step outside so we can kill you." Roque, head of the Assembly to Promote Civil Society (APSC), told us that it was the worst act of repudiation she had ever experienced. Roque also told us of a meeting hosted by the Hungarian Ambassador in which the Czech, Polish and Slovak chiefs of mission took part, along with Roque and fellow activists Oswaldo Paya and Vladimiro Roca. Roque said the Hungarian Ambassador told her and Paya that a Hungarian NGO is interested in setting up an Internet center in Havana. She described her conversation with Paya as "positive and fluid," marking the first such conversation in four or five years. Hunger-striking journalist Guillermo Farinas reportedly ordered his IV drip to be cut off on August 20, but was granted a transfer to a different hospital wing the same day. It is unclear whether he subsequently ordered the catheter to be reinserted. End Summary.

12. (C) Roque said a half-dozen men, including a resident of her housing complex, occupied the complex's hallway for six hours and staged an "act of repudiation" against her. She said the participants "acted drunk," hurled insults and obscenities and hammered on her window with the butt of a pistol, inviting her to "step outside so we can kill you." One of the participants told the others he had attacked Felix Bonne and not suffered any consequence. (Note: On January 29, a Communist militant knocked Bonne, 67, of APSC, to the ground. End Note.) Roque told Poloff August 21 that she viewed the incident as payback for spreading news about Guillermo Farinas, the hunger-striking independent journalist being kept alive with IV fluids at a Santa Clara hospital. Roque said she was afraid for her life. "They might have been just acting drunk to scare me, but they might have actually been drunk. If they're drunk and get out of hand and they actually kill me, the Government can hide behind the alcohol excuse."

HUNGARIANS PROPOSE INTERNET CENTER

13. (C) Roque also told us of a meeting August 17 hosted by the Hungarian Ambassador in which the Czech, Polish and Slovak chiefs of mission took part, along with Roque and fellow leading activists Oswaldo Paya and Vladimiro Roca. Roque said the meeting, at a restaurant, marked the Hungarian Government's first outreach to dissidents in Havana. She said it was also the first time that Roque and Paya had held "a real, positive conversation" in four or five years. At one point in the evening, Roque said, the Hungarian Ambassador asked to switch seats with the Czech Ambassador

and, seated between Roque and Paya, informed them quietly (and exclusively) that an unidentified Hungarian NGO "has money to set up an Internet center in Cuba," and asked their views. Roque and Paya favored the idea and said they would give some thought to where the proposed center should be located. Roque added that any such center should offer dissidents the chance to view satellite TV.

#### FARINAS REPORTEDLY REMOVES CATHETER

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14. (C) Roque quoted Alicia Fernandez, the mother of Guillermo Farinas, as saying that her son had ordered the removal August 20 of a catheter through which fluids were sustaining his body. However, the same day, authorities granted Farinas' request to be transferred to another wing of Arnaldo Milian Castro hospital, where he could receive visitors. It was not clear August 21 whether the catheter had been reinserted. Farinas, campaigning for Internet access for all Cubans, has waged a hunger strike since January 31.  
PARMLY